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Introduction

This book, *Let's Speak Twi: A Proficiency Course in Akan Language and Culture*, is the outcome of many years of teaching and research on the Akan language and culture by the authors.

In September 2002, we started teaching at the University of Hong Kong (HKU), as part of a comprehensive research programme in African languages at the Department of Linguistics, a summer course and workshop in African Studies (SCOWAS). The main aim of the course was to create an atmosphere for graduate students and professors of Linguistics to elicit primary research materials on African languages and for students at the University of Hong Kong to learn an African language and culture, and this was indeed the first time that such a course was being offered anywhere in Hong Kong. The course and materials we produced were meant to be as naturalistic as possible based on and embedded in everyday African life in the rural areas of Africa where the language is used in its purest form.

Conversational Language Learning

In terms of language learning theories and frameworks, this book is based on the first author's theory of learning termed Conversational Learning Theory which highlights the important notion of *Conversational Learning Community* (CLC). CLC has been employed in the production of learning materials for languages such as Dagaare and Zhuang, the largest minority language spoken in China, and in the development of web-based materials for learning linguistics and related disciplines like Information Technology. This theory, as applied here, involves the creation of a sense of community among learners by gradually building up dialogues and activities based on everyday activities such greetings, introducing oneself, counting, making appointments, buying and selling things in the market, talking about the weather, giving directions, talking about family relations, eating and drinking, etc. The performance of these dialogues and the exercises associated with them are essential for creating a context in which learners use the language as if they were living everyday life as Akan people. New words and expressions are listed in each chapter to highlight them and to indicate when they first appeared. There is a more comprehensive Akan-English word list or abridged lexicon at the end of the book to serve as a handy reference for vocabulary acquisition. Grammatical points are not explicitly tabulated but the exercises form the basis for discussing these.

Orthographic Representation

Akan is a member of the Kwa branch of the Niger-Congo language family and it is mainly spoken in Ghana. It is encoded in the alphabetic writing system, which is well-established and widely used. However, it is important to note that, in documents written in Akan, some phonemes in the language are represented by different graphemes or alphabets from one author to the other. There are thirty-one graphemes including nine diagraphs in Akan: a, b, d, e, ε, f, g, h, i, k, l, m, n, o, ɔ, p, r, s, t, u, w, y, ky, gy, hy, tw, dw, ny, kw, hw, nw.

Akan is a two-tone language. The two tones are high (H) and low (L). H tone is indicated by the acute (´) and L tone is indicated by the grave (`). The tones can sometimes be the only distinguishing factor between words (see (1)) and phrases (see (2)). In other words, tones could be lexically and grammatically significant in Akan. See *Appendix A* for more examples.

1. a. pápá ‘goodness’
b. pàpà ‘fan’
c. pàpá ‘father’
2. a. Kòfi ñkásá ‘Kofi should talk.’
b. Kòfi ìkásá ‘Kofi does not talk’

Akan is a large language group with several regional varieties. The three most prominent are Asante Twi, Akuapem Twi, and Fante. This textbook mostly teaches Asante Twi forms, although Fante forms are sometimes given. Although the term Akan refers to all three varieties (as well as several others), throughout this text we use the terms ‘Akan’ and ‘Twi’ interchangeably, as people also often do in Ghana.

Acknowledgments

This book is result of many years of research into Akan language, culture, and society. We are very grateful to the University of Hong Kong and the Research Grants Council of Hong Kong for enthusiastically funding our research on Akan and other African languages through the RGC project number 10205398, the University Teaching Development Fund project number 10100188, and the KK Leung project numbers 21374047 and 21374058. The first author is very grateful to the second, who as doctoral candidate and later research assistant and tutor for the summer course on Twi, worked on many of his research projects involving Akan and other African languages.

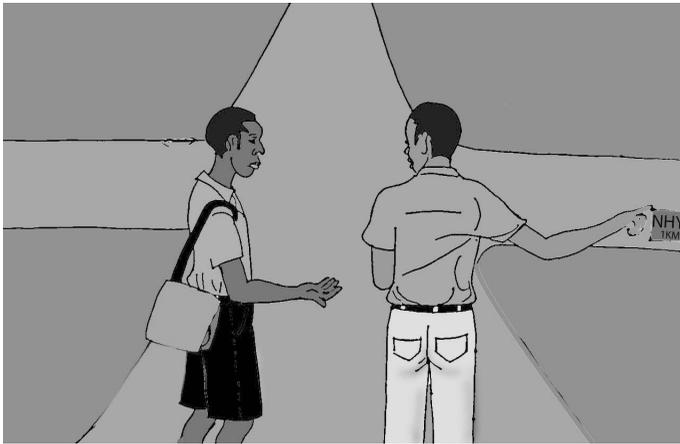
We are also grateful to members of the Linguistic Theory and Technology group who served as sounding boards for many issues on the structure of Akan first presented at our research meetings. We thank staff and students of the Faculty of Arts, especially those who have been taking our Summer Course in African Linguistics and Workshop in African Studies (SCOWAS), for their enthusiasm in participating in our research on Akan language and culture. Finally, we are grateful to all people who have read parts of this book and offered us crucial suggestions on how to improve it. We hope that learners of Akan and other users of this book will find it useful and we will be grateful for any feedback.

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Directions – Àkwà̀nkyè̀é



6.1 Pointers to note – ùhwèsòs bí

<i>Twí</i>	<i>English</i>
nífá	right
bè̀nkú́m	left
nífá só	right (hand) side
bè̀nkú́m só	left (hand) side
̀nkyéémú / èhó	beside
̀mfímfíní	middle
è mú	inside
àkyíré	behind
àníń	in front of
àníń tètè	straight ahead
àpùèé	east
àtòéé	west
àtífí	north
ànááfóó	south
èrèkó àtòéé	towards west

èrékó àpùèé	towards east
èkwáń	road / path / way
ńkwàńtá	junction
ńtwàhó	roundabout
àséé	under
èsóró / èsó	up / top / in the sky
dùá nó ásé	under the tree
bépó nó só / àpàmpàmp	on top of the mountain
bépó nó hó	beside the mountain

6.2 Some directional expressions – *Ñsém bí à èfá àkwàńkyèré hó*

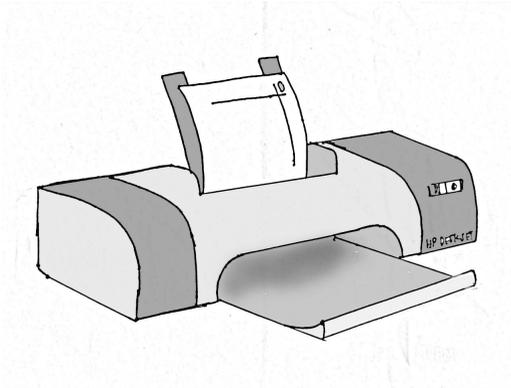
<i>Twi</i>	<i>English</i>
Kò w'áním tètè.	Go straightforward.
Kò àkyírè.	Go back.
Kò nífá só.	Go to the right (hand side).
Kò bèńkúm só.	Go to the left (hand side).
Mànè nífá só.	Turn towards right (hand side).
Mànè bèńkúm só.	Turn towards left (hand side).
Brà àkyírè.	Come back.
Gyìnà hó.	Stand/stop there.
Tènà m'ákyí	Sit behind me.
Hwè sóró / fám.	Look upwards / downwards.
Hwè wò nífá só.	Look at your right (hand) side.
Kò w'áním ná mànè nífá só.	Go straight and turn to the right.
Èfírí àtífí kósí ànàáfóó.	From the north to the south.
Àwíá púé wò àpùéé ná àtó wò àtòéé.	The sun rises in the east and sets in the west.
Èdán á ètó só nán wò bèńkúm só nó mú nà mètéé.	It is the 4th house from the left that I live in.
Sàfòà nó dà èpónó nó só / àsé.	The key is <u>on</u> / <u>under</u> the table.
Àbòfíá nó hyè né mààmé ákyí.	The child is behind (tied to the back of) his/her mother.
Pàpá nó tètè dán nó áním.	The man is sitting in front of the house.
Mètè èpónó / pòńkò nó só.	I'm sitting on the <u>table</u> / <u>horse</u> .
Kúsíé hyé/ dá àmèná nó mú.	A rat is inside the hole.

6.3 A dialogue about directions – Ñk̀mm̀d̀íe bí à èfá àkwà̀nk̀yè̀rè hó

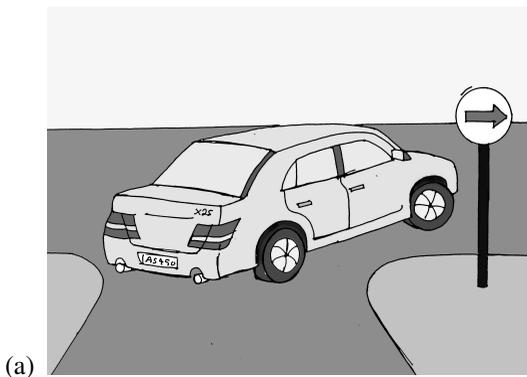
<i>Twi</i>	<i>English</i>
Kyèi: Dèdè, kò àsásó hó nà fá ètòá nó àà èsí èpónó nó ásé nó bfè mè.	Kyei: Dede, go into the living room and bring the bottle under the table to me.
Dèdè: Yòdò! Éí, èmú yè dùrù pápá. Èdèén nà èwó mú?	Dede: All right! Ai, it is very heavy. What is inside (the bottle)?
Kyèi: Èyè àdúró. Fá kó Kégyétíá kómá wó mààmé.	Kyei: It is medicine. Take it to Kejetia and give it to your mother.
Dèdè: Èhé nà Kégyétíá wó? Méfá kwán bèñ só ákó hó?	Dede: Where is Kejetia? How do I get there (which road will lead me there)?
Kyèi: Kò w'áním tèè kòsí sè wóbéhúnú sòtòó bí àà yéátwéré àním sé 'Ònyàmé túmí'. Wódúru hó àà, mànè fá bènkúrm só.	Kyei: Go straightforward until you see a store with the inscription: 'God's power'. At this point, turn towards your left.
Dèdè: Yòdò! Mèmàné fá bènkúrm só àà, ményé dèñ bíó?	Dede: All right! After turning towards my left, what should I do next?
Kyèi: Kò w'áním tèè kòsí sè wóbéhú ñkwàntá bí. Èhó nó, wòdàné w'ání hwé wò nífá só àà, Kégyétíá árá né nó.	Kyei: Go straight until you see a junction. At this point, if you look towards your right, you will see Kejetia.
Dèdè: Kégyétíá késéé yí né mú ñnípá pìi yí, méyè dèñ àhù mé màámé ápátá?	Dede: How do I find my mother's shed /store with Kejetia being that big and with a lot of people?
Kyèi: Nyà ñtòbòàsèé. Wómá w'ání só hwé sóró kàkfrá àà, wóbéhúnú èdán ténténé bí. Sàá èdán yí ásé pèè nà wó màámé sòtòó wó.	Kyei: Be patient. If you look a little up, you'll see a tall building. It is on the ground floor of this building that your mother's store is.
Dèdè: Ònó ñkó árá sòtòó nà èwó hó?	Dede: Is her store the only one there?
Kyèi: Dààbí! Wódúru àà, sòtòó àà ètó só núm fíri wò nífá só nó mú nà wóbéhú wó mààmé.	Kyei: No! If you reach there, you will find your mother in the fifth store from your right.
Dèdè: Yòdò! Mèrèkó àbà sèèséí árá.	Dede: All right! I'll be back soon.
Kyèi: Mèdààsè! Ñní ágóró wò kwán mú òdò!	Kyei: Thank you! Don't play on the way!

Exercises

1. In Akan-Twi, give someone directions from your dormitory/residence to the classroom, and the back again from the classroom to your residence.
2. Stand next to you tutor, teacher, or classmate and then give him/her directions using the vocabulary and phrases presented in this chapter (turn to your left, look upwards, etc.). Then, trade with him/her and follow similar instructions from your tutor/classmate.
3. With your knowledge on how locations are identified in Akan-Twi, describe the following pictures in Akan-Twi, e.g.:



Kfátàá nó hyè àfidíé nó mú.
'The paper is in the machine.'



Káá nó rè _____.
'The car is taking a right turn'.



(b)

- i. Pàpá nò _____ pòṅkó nó _____.
‘The man is sitting on the horse’
- ii. Pòṅkó nó r̀è _____
‘The horse is going forward’.



(c)

- i. Ñkwàdàá nó _____ ṁfòyíní nó _____.
‘The children are sitting in front of the picture.’
- ii. ṁfòyíní nó _____ ñkwàdàá nó _____.
‘The picture is hanging behind the children.’
- iii. Bóólò nó _____ àkwàdàá nó nání _____.
‘The ball is lying beside the child.’



(d)

i. Ñnípá nó tètè kyinièé nó _____.
'The people are sitting under the umbrella.'

ii. Òbáá nó _____ òbàríamá nó _____ só.
'The woman is sitting at the left of the man.'

4. Referring to this map of Ghana, describe the orientation of one region to the other. For example, where is the Volta Region with respect to the Eastern Region? Where is the Ashanti (a.k.a. Asante) Region with respect to the Brong Ahafo Region?



5. Wherever you are, find a city map. Ask and give directions to your classmates between key points on the map such as the school(s), market(s), etc.